

To : Council President
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville Maryland 20850

Testimony Regarding the FY24 Operating Budget
Gi Gi Parris
Silver Spring Maryland, 20910

Addressing Budgetary Allotments FY23 for Pedestrian Safety Enhancements in North Woodside, Forest Glen, Montgomery Hills, Silver Spring Maryland.

To : Montgomery County Council members.

In 2018 I was involved in a vehicular/pedestrian incident at Seminary Plaza Georgia Avenue and Ripley Street. After contacting the appropriate departments and property manager, a stop sign was added and a pedestrian walkway was painted at the entrance of the center.

A while later, I became cognizant that the community North of Seminary Road had limited or no sidewalks or buffers from traffic, and only one speed limit sign for traffic entering Locust Grove from Georgia Avenue. The roads or streets leading to the end of Second Avenue have no buffers against vehicle traffic.

The Montgomery Planning “Pedestrian Master Plan :Draft Design, Policy and Programming Recommendations (July 2022)” states that “achieving Pedestrian Master Plan goals will require building new sidewalks, rehabilitating existing pathways, building more places to cross streets.....where walking is the preferred way to get around.”

The recently approved “Complete Streets Design” recommends sidewalks on both sides of the street, with adequate buffers from traffic, however, the county's busiest roads lack about 220 miles of sidewalks. And about 54% of sidewalks do not meet the minimum requirements to be 5 feet wide. The end of Second Avenue and adjoining streets have no buffers from traffic.

The Vision Zero Program (County’s Action Plan) Data Explorer - November 2017, states that between 2012 and 2016, there were 375 collisions between vehicles and pedestrians - 49 fatal and 326 severe county wide. In 2021, there were 244 serious and fatal collisions involving pedestrians county wide.

The revenue for enhanced Pedestrian Safety is there, but much is needed for faster progress on fulfilling pedestrian safety enhancements.

The County Executive and Council approved \$123.1 million in FY23 for expenditures in support of Vision Zero, which includes \$53.8 million for Vision Zero initiatives. Part of the initiative includes “installing pedestrian refuge islands, curb extensions, SPEED HUMPS, and markings”, for traffic calming improvements and improved sidewalk connectivity to transportation, commercial and employment areas. All of these circumstances for improving pedestrian safety are critical and relevant for the community North of Seminary Road, between Forest Glen.

My community and I thank the County Council for the opportunity to express our concerns about pedestrian safety in the North Woodside, Montgomery Hills, Forest Glen area.

I have hopes that at least a feasibility profile for pre-emptive measures could be conducted to see if this community merits budgetary inclusion in any upcoming pedestrian improvement projects for Fiscal Year 2024

Information Sources :

[MontgomeryPlanning.org/planning/transportation/pedestrian-planning/pedestrian-masterplan/recommendations](https://montgomeryplanning.org/planning/transportation/pedestrian-planning/pedestrian-masterplan/recommendations).

Montgomery County Maryland - Vision Zero Data Explorer.